



NEWS RELEASE

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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY MAN CONVICTED IN SCHOOL SCHEME THAT CAUSED \$6 MILLION IN LOSSES TO VICTIMS ACROSS U.S.

LOS ANGELES – A Santa Ynez man who falsely promised bartending and “mystery shopper” jobs to people around the country has been convicted of 10 federal fraud charges.

Steven P. Todorovic, 40, was found guilty yesterday afternoon of seven counts of wire fraud and three counts of mail fraud, charges that carry a statutory maximum penalty of 200 years in federal prison.

Todorovic set up several companies in Santa Barbara – including American Bartending Institute and Consumer Response Group – to market and sell his bogus training program, “certifications” and job referrals. The evidence presented at Todorovic’s trial showed that he orchestrated a scheme that placed advertisements in newspapers across the country offering bartending and “mystery shopping” positions. Those who inquired about the jobs were then misled into thinking they had to purchase his company’s certification programs, promising that the certifications would come with referrals to bars and retail establishments hiring bartenders or mystery shoppers. The certifications, however, were worthless, and Todorovic had no jobs to offer.

The evidence at trial showed that more than 80,000 victims across the United States were defrauded by the scheme, which took in more than \$6.1 million.

Todorovic is scheduled to be sentenced on October 18 by United States District Judge Terry J. Hatter Jr.

The case against Todorovic was investigated by the United States Postal

Inspection Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The matter was referred by the Federal Trade Commission, which had filed a civil lawsuit against Todorovic.

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